

# THE BUTTERFLIES OF BOMBAY AND SALSETTE

BY

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From June 1948 until the beginning of March 1950 I devoted practically every weekend to the collecting of butterflies on the island of Salsette, and covered practically the whole of this area.<sup>1</sup>

I found the best places were the jungle paths round Tulsi Lake, the trolley line between Vihar and Tulsi Lakes, the path from Tulsi Lake to Kanheri Caves, the top of Trombay Hill and the thick jungle at the bottom on the south-eastern side of Trombay Hill.

The higher hills round Tulsi Lake were all visited, and the walk from Thana over the hills to Ghodbunder was undertaken more than once. But these higher hills did not prove of much interest and very few good butterflies were seen. On the other hand, the top of Trombay Hill proved a very good collecting ground, particularly for *Charaxes polyxima imna*, *Charaxes fabius fabius*, *Eriboea athamas athamas*, *Chilasa clytia clytia* and *Chilasa clytia dissimilis*, all of which were scarce elsewhere.

Other areas visited were the low hills behind the beach between Malad and Silversands, the path from Borivili to Kanheri Caves, Powai Lake area and Vihar Lake area.

The list given below is compiled from butterflies actually taken and definitely identified, and in cases where I was in doubt as to correct identification, especially in the Lycaenidae and Hesperidae families, my specimens were identified by the authorities in the museum at Bombay. The only one in my list not taken is *Papilio polymnestor polymnestor*, but there can be no doubt over this as there is no other possible identification for such a conspicuous butterfly.

There are at least three other lycaenids in the area, but as I have not been able to obtain specimens they have not been included in my list. One of these is, I think, *Amblypodia centaurus*.

## PAPILIONIDAE

### 1. *Polydorus aristolochiae*

Very common at all seasons. Very variable in extent of white patches on hind wings.

[My experience is that this insect is common in places only.]<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a map and topographical details etc. see *The Birds of Bombay and Salsette* by Sálim Ali and Humayun Abdulali. *Jour. B.N.H.S.*, Vol. 39, pp. 84-87.

<sup>2</sup> The notes within square brackets are by Mr. J. I. Alfrey, a keen student of butterflies with long experience of the Bombay neighbourhood.—Eds.

2. **Polydorus hector**

Uncommon. A few seen at Malad in July and August, and one at Trombay in August.

[Fairly common and of course is a great migrant.]

3. **Papilio polytes**

Not a common butterfly in this area though I have seen it all over Salsette, but never more than two or three in a day. One female, form *stichius*, was taken at Tulsi in August and was exceptionally large—116 mm. This was the only female seen.

[Common in places; this remark covers the 2 female forms also. These 2 forms have bred on a small lime tree on my terrace garden.]

4. **Papilio polymnestor**

One seen on the 6th November near Tulsi. A very difficult butterfly to catch.

[I record having seen a fine female in the garden of 'Silver End', Strand Road, obviously travelling from across the harbour.]

5. **Papilio demoleus demoleus**

Very common everywhere.

[Agree. This can be a terrific defoliator; I record one large lime tree that was entirely stripped of foliage by the larvae of this insect at the Cooperage and as new leaf buds appeared, females again oviposited on them and the tree eventually died. This insect is interesting and I have noted migrations at different places, the last one being at Jhansi where the insects frequented the Kitson oil lamps on the railway station at night; also came into the railway carriages where several were lacerated on coming into contact with the electric fans.]

6. **Chilasa clytia clytia**

Very scarce—only four seen—three on top of Trombay Hill in January and February, and one at Tulsi Lake in March.

7. **Chilasa clytia dissimilis**

Commoner than *clytia clytia*, but not plentiful. Taken on Trombay Hill, Vihar Lake and Tulsi Lake.

8. **Graphium agamemnon menides**

Common all over the area July to October; scarce in other months.

9. **Graphium teredon sarpedon**

Very scarce. Only three seen at Tulsi in October-November, and two at Kanheri.

10. **Graphium nomius nomius**

Took two good specimens at Tulsi in March; several seen on the same day. Not seen elsewhere or at any other time.

[11. **P. helenus**

I have seen them several times at Ghodbunder, but not taken any.]

## PIERIDAE

1. **Leptosia nina nina**  
Very common in all wooded areas.
2. **Delias eucharis**  
Very common everywhere.
3. **Appias libythea libythea**  
Only three seen—all males at Malad in July. No female seen.
4. **Appias albina**  
One male taken at Malad in July; no others seen.
5. **Catopsilia crocale**  
Very common, especially ♂♂. Very variable in size and markings.
6. **Catopsilia pomona**  
Not so common as *crocale*, but quite plentiful.
7. **Catopsilia pomona var. catilla**  
Not common. One female taken at Powai and others seen at Tulsi.
8. **Catopsilia pyranthe pyranthe**  
Fairly common everywhere.
9. **Terias libythea**  
Common everywhere.
10. **Terias venata venata**  
Rather scarce. A few taken at Powai Lake in August.
11. **Terias laeta**  
Not so common as *libythea*, but plentiful.
12. **Terias hecabe simulata**  
Very common.
13. **Huphina nerissa phyrne**  
Very common everywhere.
14. **Ixias pyrene**  
Males common everywhere; females scarcer but not rare.
15. **Ixias marianne**  
Males common everywhere; females scarce.

**16. *Hebomoia glaucippe australis***

Fairly common—particularly round Tulsi Lake. Females scarcer than males. Saw one in Marine Drive in February.

**17. *Colotis amata amata***

A few seen at Malad in July; not seen anywhere else.

**18. *Colotis etrida***

Fairly common in July August and again December to March.

**19. *Valeria valeria hippia***

Males very common but females scarce. Only a few seen in August and October at Powai and Tulsi.

**[20. *C. calois modesta* ?]**

## DANAIDAE

**1. *Danais limniace mutina***

Very common everywhere.

**2. *Danais septentrionis***

Only three seen and two taken—all at Tulsi Lake in October. Specimens taken with brown stains on upper hind wing.

**3. *Danais aglaea aglaea***

Not common on Salsette. A few seen on Trombay and one taken at Powai in August.

[I can most definitely confirm that I have taken this butterfly on Salsette during the monsoon—notably at Powai Lake in August and also at Trombay.]

**4. *Danais plexippus***

Very common everywhere.

**5. *Danais chrysippus***

Very common everywhere. In July at Malad a number of very small specimens were taken, all measuring between 52 and 56 mm.

**6. *Euploea core core***

Very common.

**7. *Euploea coreta coreta***

Only seen at Tulsi in October.

There was a great swarm of *Euploeas* at Tulsi Lake in October 1949 on thistles and other flowers at the eastern edge of the lake. I caught a few and noticed that one of them had the two bands on the forewing, and later out of over 100 caught I found there were 9 *coreta*. This was noted by Mr. Alfrey when I showed him my collection, though possibly he may not remember.

## SATYRIDAE

1. ***Mycalesis perseus***

Common everywhere.

2. ***Mycalesis mineus polydecta***

Fairly common.

3. ***Lethe nohria nilgirensis***

One taken at Tulsi—the only one seen.

4. ***Ypthima baldus***

Very common.

5. ***Ypthima hubneri***

Fairly common.

6. ***Melanitis leda ismene***

Very common.

## ERYCINIDAE

***Abisara echerius prunosa***

Fairly common.

## NYMPHALIDAE

1. ***Charaxes polyena imna***

Not common but fairly plentiful on the top of Trombay Hill where I have seen as many as twelve in one day. Very difficult to catch and I have only taken two tattered males. Females very scarce. Also saw one male at Tulsi.

2. ***Charaxes fabius fabius***

Not common. Have taken two on Trombay Hill and one at Ghodbunder. Not seen elsewhere.

3. ***Eulipis athamas***

Not common. Several taken on Trombay Hill; also seen at Tulsi.

4. ***Apatura camiba***

One male taken at Tulsi; otherwise have not seen this anywhere.

5. ***Euthalia lubentina***

One seen at Tulsi.

6. ***Euthalia garuda anagama***

Not common, but have seen a few at Tulsi and at Kanheri. One flew into the house in Bombay at 9 p.m. one night in October.

7. **Euthalia nais forst**  
Not common but seen at Malad, Tulsī, Powai and Trombay.
8. **Limenitis procris**  
Uncommon. Have seen six in all at Tulsī only: November, December, March.
9. **Pantoporia inara**  
One seen at Tulsī but not identified positively—December.
10. **Neptis columella**  
Only two seen and taken, both at Tulsī in November.
11. **Neptis hylas varuna**  
Very common everywhere.
12. **Precis hierta hierta**  
Very common everywhere.
13. **Precis lemonias vaisya**  
Very common.
14. **Precis iphita pluvialis**  
Very common.
15. **Precis almana almana**  
Not so common as other *Precis*.
16. **Precis orithiya**  
Scarce. Not more than 12 seen during 9 months' collecting.
17. **Vanessa cardui**  
Very common, especially at Malad in October.
18. **Hypolimnas bolina**  
Males very scarce; only three seen, two at Tulsī and one in Bombay City. Females very common.
19. **Hypolimnas misippus**  
Females very scarce; only two taken in the whole period (November), both at Tulsī Lake. Males plentiful October-December, but scarce at other times.
20. **Kallima philarctus horsfieldii**  
Very scarce. Took six at bottom of Trombay Hill in August including 1 pair *in copula* and saw another pair *in copula*. Seen others at the same place early October, but not since. One also seen at Tulsī in October and another in March; otherwise none.
21. **Atella phalante**  
Very common everywhere.

**22. *Ergolis merione taprobana***

One seen at Malad, and one taken at Tulsi.

**23. *Telchinia violae***

Only four seen: two at Malad, one at Kanheri and one taken at Trombay in August.

## LYCAENIDAE

**1. *Jamides celeno celeno***

Common all the year round.

**2. *Jamides bochus bochus***

Males common in August in wooded country; females rarer. Seen from August to February.

**3. *Castalius rosimon rosimon***

Common all the year round in wooded country.

**4. *Castalius deleta decidia***

Fairly common. Flies with *rosimon*, but is scarcer.

**5. *Zizera trochilus putli***

Taken at Powai in August, Tulsi in September. Very common.

**6. *Zizera lysimon***

A number seen at Kanheri in October and one or two at Tulsi; otherwise not common.

**7. *Spindasis vulcanus vulcanus***

Not common. Two taken at Malad in July and a few seen at Tulsi. One seen on Marine Drive.

**8. *Spindasis lohita lazularia***

Only two seen on the same day and one perfect specimen taken at Tulsi in March.

**9. *Rapala schistacea***

One taken at Powai in August, the only one seen.

**10. *Rapala melampus***

One taken at Trombay in October. No others seen.

**11. *Rapala varuna lazulina***

Several seen at Kanheri in October and two taken. Others seen at Trombay in November.

**12. *Catachrysops strabo***

Common everywhere.

**13. *Loxura atymnus atymnus***

Rather scarce. I have only seen this at Vihar and Powai Lakes in August, one pair *in copula*.

**14. *Curetis thetis***

Females very common at Malad in July and August; also at Vihar and Powai lakes. Males much scarcer; only two seen at Trombay in October and another at Tulsi in November.

**15. *Rathinda amor***

Very scarce. Took two at Tulsi in August.

**16. *Amblypodia alemon***

Only one seen and taken on Trombay; no others seen anywhere. I am fairly certain this is correct. It was identified by Mr. Gilbert on or about the 12th March last year, and it seems to closely resemble the description and also a specimen in the Museum.

**17. *Amblypodia amantes amantes***

Saw a fine male at Tulsi in July, the only male seen. Saw hundreds on top of Trombay on 27th August. All appeared to be migrating, and were flying about 10 ft. high. Took one female. The same day I saw four fly across Marine Drive. All were flying south-east, both at Trombay and Marine Drive. Apart from that one day this butterfly is very scarce, and I have only taken 4 females, all at Tulsi, in February.

**18. *Horsfieldia anita anita***

Only two seen and taken, both at the foot of Trombay in March.

**19. *Iraota timoleon timoleon***

Only seen two at Tulsi in August of which one female was taken. Another seen in November at the same place.

**20. *Virachola perse ghala***

One taken at Tulsi in February in very tattered condition. The only one seen.

**21. *Surendra biplagiata***

Only one taken at Vihar Lake in August.

**22. *Syntarucus plinius***

One taken at Kanheri in October.

**23. *Nacaduba viola***

Several taken at Tulsi in November and December.

**24. *Lycaenopsis puspa***

Several taken in Tulsi in August.



## HESPERIDÆ

1. **Hasora alexis alexis**  
Fairly common at Powai in August; also seen at Malad in July.
2. **Coladenia indrana indra**  
Common.
3. **Badamia exclamationis**  
Very common. I observed a large number migrating in a southerly direction on 27 August at Trombay, and again on the 2nd October at Malad. I counted 130 in a period of 10 minutes at Trombay and 57 in 10 minutes at Malad, and in both cases the migration continued all the morning. They were flying at a height of about 8 ft., though some were higher.
4. **Caprona ransonetti**  
Common at Powai in August. Not seen anywhere else.
5. **Suestus gremius gremius**  
Only two seen, both at Powai in July.
6. **Udaspes folus**  
Common at Powai, Vihar and Trombay at all seasons.
7. **Sarangesa desahara**  
One only at Powai in August.
8. **Padrona dara roll**  
Two taken at Malad in July.
9. **Baoris zelleri cinnara**  
One at Powai in August.
10. **Baoris kumara kumara**  
Two at Trombay in October.
11. **Astycus pythias bambusae**  
Taken at Trombay and Tulsi in August.
12. **Taractocera c. ceramus**  
Common at Trombay at all seasons. Not seen elsewhere.
13. **Calaenorrhinus ambaresa**  
A few taken at Tulsi in March.